

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A toothbrush comprising a handle, a head mounted to one end of said handle, cleaning elements extending outwardly from the head, a cover for the toothbrush extending beyond the periphery of at least a portion of cleaning elements on the toothbrush head, a mounting structure detachably securing the cover to the toothbrush, and at least one interchangeable decorative overlay detachably connected to the cover.

2. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein the mounting structure includes flexible U-shaped flanges on the cover that are dimensioned to engage at least one of the head and handle of the toothbrush when the cover is placed on the toothbrush.

3. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein mating male and female connections on the cover and decorative overlay detachably connect the decorative overlay to the cover.

4. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein a ball and socket are used to removably connect the decorative overlay to the cover.

5. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein multiple depressions which are capable of receiving and holding mating hemispherical surfaces are used to removably connect the decorative overlay to the cover.

6. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein the appearance of the decorative overlay is complemented by the appearance of the underlying cover.

7. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein the cover has decorative features complementing the features of the overlay.

8. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein a decorative escutcheon is detachably attached to the toothbrush handle.

9. The toothbrush of claim 8 wherein the decorative escutcheon complements the appearance of the cover.

10. The toothbrush of claim 1 wherein there are a plurality of overlays detachably connected to the cover with at least one overlay being mounted between the cover and another overlay.

11. A toothbrush comprising a handle, a head mounted to one end of the handle, the head having a front face and a rear face, the head having opposite side walls and an intermediate end wall connecting the front face to the rear face, cleaning elements mounted to and extending outwardly of the front face, a cover made of a shape retaining material, mounting structure detachably securing the cover to the head on the front face side of the head, and the cover extending outwardly of the cleaning elements beyond the outer periphery of the cleaning elements and out of pressing contact with the cleaning elements.

12. The toothbrush of claim 11 wherein the cover is mounted to the head so as to permit air flow and air circulation through the cleaning elements.

13. The toothbrush of claim 11 wherein the cleaning elements are bristles, and the cover being spaced from and out of contact with the bristles.

14. The toothbrush of claim 11 including a visible ornamentation on the cover.

15. The toothbrush of claim 11 wherein the cover is generally planar without any depending walls.

5        16. The toothbrush of claim 11 wherein the mounting structure comprises at least one post extending from the cover and engaged in a corresponding hole in the front face of the head.

10       17. The toothbrush of claim 11 wherein the cover includes side flanges extending outwardly from each side of the cover to create a generally U-shaped structure.

18. The toothbrush of claim 17 wherein the cover is open at both axially longitudinal ends to create an open tunnel between the side flanges.

15       19. The toothbrush of claim 17 wherein the cover includes an end flange at its end remote from said handle, and said cover being open at its end near said handle.

20       20. The toothbrush of claim 17 wherein the mounting structure includes projections on the side flanges engaged in openings in the side walls of the head.

25       21. The toothbrush of claim 11 wherein the cover includes an end flange at its end remote from the handle and a second end flange at its end disposed toward the handle, and the cover including air holes to permit air circulation through the cleaning elements.

22. The toothbrush of claim 11 wherein the cover is of a size to completely cover the entire area of the outer ends of the cleaning elements, and the cover being disposed to

extend no further than the walls of the head whereby the cover does not extend to the rear face.